

## GCSU alumnus films NOVA documentary about invasive lionfish

In 2018, Jeff Boedeker, '04, was underwater filming a sunken aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Mexico when he spotted several lionfish inside the shipwreck.

"They're beautiful, and I had no idea what lionfish were," he said. "After filming, I spoke to other divers on the shoot who told me how they are invasive and weren't there 20 or 30 years ago. And, it got me thinking."

Boedeker didn't do anything about it right then because he was producing a film. But a few years later, he recalled the masses of lionfish—from Maine to Brazil and throughout the Caribbean—that are destroying ocean ecosystems with their massive appetite.

In some places, lionfish make up nearly 40% of the Atlantic Ocean's predators, killing off 80% of young fish.

He wondered how that happened and what mechanisms allowed them to flourish.

"It's remarkable when you open that door and wonder what's going on here," Boedeker said. "You have a fish that went from zero to a multi-continent population explosion within 30 years. How does that happen?"

"Most of time when species enter a new habitat they don't necessarily belong in, they just die," he said. "But every once in a while, you get something like the lionfish, which has all the perfect characteristics and really gets lucky."

He wondered why the lionfish are so successful. Without natural predators in the Atlantic Ocean, the species quickly became invasive. They aren't "bad" fish on their own. They're bad because of where they're now located.

"When you think deeply about that, it can be startling," Boedeker said, "because we're now able to do these unprecedented things with nature."

People caused this problem, when setting their exotic pets free into the wild. This transports species into ecosystems where they didn't evolve.

"Breaking down the science of what's happening is interesting," he said. "When we introduce species from halfway around the world into new environments, we're short-circuiting evolution."

Boedeker was so captivated by this idea he wanted to create a film that explored the enormity of the problem and deconstruct how a species becomes invasive. So, his team created a TV treatment and distributed it to different networks. NOVA picked up the story, "Ocean Invaders," which premiered Oct. 26.

"It's a story that hasn't been told on TV," Boedeker said. "We thought the treatment was strong enough from a science standpoint where NOVA would be a great national platform for our film."

Boedeker uses the English and creative writing skills he developed at Georgia College & State

University (GCSU) to create TV documentaries and series. His education helps him in most everything he does—from story concepts to running a production company. It also helped him in graduate school and afterward, when working as series producer at National Geographic.

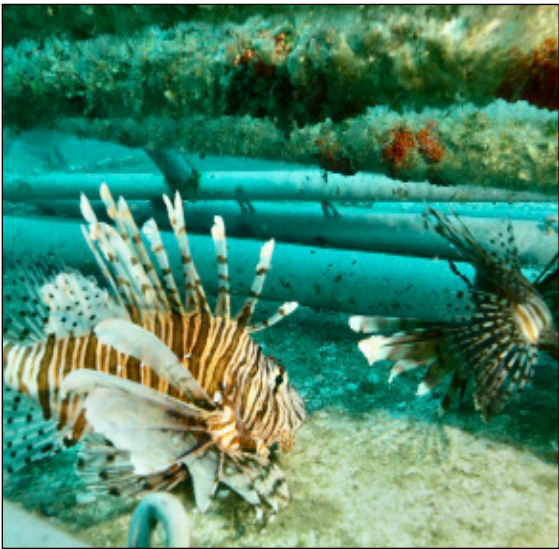
Biology Professor Emerita Dr. Harriett Whipple made a remarkable impact on Boedeker, who started at GCSU as a biology major. She asked him to broaden his perspective and understand how different disciplines interconnect. Whipple's advice set him on the right career path.

"My experience at GCSU has had a direct influence on where I am right now with my career," Boedeker said. "Dr. Whipple told me there's so much storytelling that happens within the sciences, like how to communicate different processes. She was a proponent of creative thinking, no matter the department. She influenced me so much."

When Boedeker shifted his major to English and creative writing, Professor Emeritus Dr. Eustace Palmer taught him the structure of writing and shared his deep, intellectual understanding of literature.

"He created a class environment where everybody felt comfortable and could speak freely," Boedeker said. "I learned how to interpret stories in a completely new way."

Boedeker wants English majors to realize there are many different platforms to tell a story, and there are many stories to tell. Storytelling got him into filmmaking, which includes visual, sound, narration and interviews. When producing a nonfiction film, Boedeker said there's a lot of writing involved. Boedeker scripted the guide's narration and directed the scenes to achieve the appropriate mixture for authenticity.



Lionfish are an invasive species in the Atlantic Ocean.

## Alumnus a role model for his family & students



Dr. Cedric Howard, '94, who was Georgia College & State University's (GCSU) commencement speaker in 2017, has been named one of the "Top 10 Inspiring People in Education" by CIO Views Magazine.

And for good reason.

As vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services at the University of Northern Colorado, Howard impacts the lives of students every day.

"I like my role because I'm able to change the trajectory of not just the lives of students, but their families,"

Howard said. "I'm very fortunate that I've been a vice president for over 20 years. And now, I get to use the vehicle of higher education as a vessel for social mobility and be transformative in my initial approach to support people who were like me."

Born and raised in the Macon, Georgia, housing projects, he was the first in his family to graduate from college. After his graduation ceremony, Howard's grandmother illustrated the importance of what he had accomplished.

"This speaks to the transformative properties of GCSU," he said. "That day at the Centennial Center, my grandmother said, 'Cedric, I would like to have your gown.'"

"I earned this one," Howard said.

"We're going to try this one more time," she said. "I would like to have your gown."

Howard handed her the gown. His grandmother turned to all 11 of Howard's cousins and said, "He is the first in our family to graduate from college. It is my expectation that each of you will bring me a college graduation gown."

"This is the key: The knowledge belongs to you," his grandmother said. "You went to school to get knowledge. The investment of the gown belongs to me."

Howard's grandmother passed away in 2011. Each time the family celebrates a new college graduate, they take the graduation gown to their grandmother's grave site and put it in a lockbox to pay respect to her and the tradition she began in June 1994.

Today, she is survived by 18 grandchildren—16 of them have college degrees.

### Did you know?

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) recently held its 20th Family Fun Night for National Chemistry Week. More than 400 people from the community attended. More than 50 students volunteered during the event.

There was a science magic show, planetarium show, hands-on activities, a blacklight maze, tie-dye t-shirt making, a periodic table of cookies, pumpkin carving the chemistry way and pyrochemistry demonstrations. There was also liquid nitrogen ice cream!

FiberVisions, Inc. hosted a "Fabulous Fibers" theme room with GCSU alumna Alexis Crawford, '19. She presented fibers, resins and color pellets. The Baldwin County Fire Department demonstrated fire resistance of fabrics.

The night ended with "elephant toothpaste," giant tubes of color shooting into the night sky, and a ping pong ball explosion! Don't miss next year's fun on Oct. 19, 2023.

## Warp Trio concert Nov. 15

Warp Trio, the Davidson Fine Arts Orchestra of Augusta and award-winning emcee, LiK WuiD, will join the Georgia College & State University (GCSU) Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. in Magnolia Ballroom for an evening of classical, jazz, hip-hop and spoken word.

All works in the program, "Black Voices," were created by African-American artists. These include poetry by Langston Hughes, Ntozake Shange and Maya Angelou, as well as original spoken word material complemented with music by Duke Ellington, William Grant Still, Harry Burleigh and Warp Trio.

"Black Voices" evolved from an effort to share with audiences some less-known contributions of African-Americans to the cultural tapestry of America. A \$5 donation is encouraged. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GCSU Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc. For more information, please email [music@gcsu.edu](mailto:music@gcsu.edu) or call 478-445-8289.



## Conference builds confidence and helps musicians grow

Student chamber ensemble, the Imposter Trio, and saxophonist Savannah McDowell represented Georgia College & State University in performances at the American Single Reed Summit (ASRS) last month in Columbia, South Carolina.

The American Single Reed Summit is a national conference that focuses on clarinet and saxophone. The summit brings professional and student musicians together to develop connections between performers that result in meaningful musical experiences for current and future generations.

The summit also focuses, in part, on pedagogy and scholarship. McDowell is a first-year student working simultaneously toward bachelor's and master's degrees in music education. She performed in a saxophone masterclass during the conference.

Georgia College Saxophone Professor Andrew J. Allen said it's unique to have a freshman performer presenting at a national conference.

The chance to collaborate with and learn from fellow musicians can have a lasting impact.

The trio selected composer Jason Rebello's "Integration" as one of the pieces for their conference performance. Senior percussionist Jacob Hammock said he hopes the ASRS performance opens doors for the Imposter Trio.



# What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit [frontpage.gcsu.edu/events](http://frontpage.gcsu.edu/events)

| Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday  |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <div>8</div> <div>Noon-5 p.m. American Red Cross Blood Drive in Peabody Auditorium.</div> | <div>9</div> <div>10 a.m.-4 p.m. American Red Cross Blood Drive in Peabody Auditorium.</div> | <div>10</div> <div>5-7 p.m. A capstone reception for the art exhibit, "inward," in Ennis Hall's Leland Gallery. Students will be on hand to speak about their work.</div> | <div>11</div> <div>6-8 p.m. GCSU Women's Basketball season opener vs. Southern Wesleyan in Centennial Center.</div> | <div>12</div> <div>1-3 p.m. GCSU Women's Basketball vs. Barton in Centennial Center.</div> <div>2-3 p.m. GCSU Music Dept. will hold its Senior Recital featuring composer and trumpeter Rafal, accompanied by pianist Dr. Hue Jang.</div> |